




What Seventh-day Adventists Believe, and Why



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Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as the only source of their beliefs. They consider their movement to be the result of the Protestant conviction *Sola Scriptura*—the Bible as the only standard of faith and practice for Christians.

Over the years, the SDA church has agreed upon key statements that summarize the principal teachings Seventh-day Adventists understand from the Bible. These statements are made collectively by a group of scholars studying and prayerfully searching the Bible with the help of the Holy Spirit. This brief publication by Dr Lionel Hartley gives these beliefs a biblical context using the SDA POV.

Currently, Adventists hold 28 fundamental beliefs that can be organized into six categories—the doctrines of God, man, salvation, the church, the Christian life and last day events. In each teaching, God is the architect, who in wisdom, grace and infinite love, is restoring a relationship with humanity that will last for eternity.

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The Doctrine of God:

We believe that God Loves

God is love, power, and splendor—and God is a mystery. His ways are far beyond us, but He still reaches out to us. God is infinite yet intimate, three yet one, all-knowing yet all-forgiving. We will spend eternity cherishing an ever-deepening relationship with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Despite the distance sin demands, God has revealed Himself in countless ways. The Bible is the story of God striving to reconnect with His children, and is a major method God uses to reach us. A mosaic of authors, styles and perspectives, the Bible reveals a God who is ever-creative, ever-patient and ever-seeking to restore our relationship with Him. Though written by ordinary people, through the Spirit it pierces our hearts, opens our eyes and convicts us to live for Him.

God the Father reached out to us most dramatically through His Son Jesus, who chose not just to visit us, but to become one of us. Born human so we can be reborn in the Spirit, Jesus showed us God's love and character—and how far God was willing to go to save us from self-destruction. What we could not do for ourselves, He did for us, paying the price for our sins, dying in our place so we can live forever. He conquered death through resurrection, and promised to return to take us home.

Meanwhile, God has not left us alone. The Holy Spirit is here to comfort us, guide us and transform us to live as

witnesses for God's love. The same Spirit who inspired prophets and empowered Jesus, who shaped scripture and created the world, enables and empowers each one of us. The Spirit activates the "body of Christ," the church, through spiritual gifts and a humble attitude of service and compassion.

The Doctrine of Man:

We believe that God Creates

From neurons to nebulae, DNA to distant galaxies, we are surrounded by wonder. Yet the beauty is broken.

Genesis tells us that a loving God split light from darkness and land from water, setting life in motion and sculpting the first human from clay. Genesis describes God's joy and satisfaction in His work, again and again delighting that each new feature is "good." Earth flourished in perfect harmony, cared for by humanity.

God celebrated His work by declaring a weekly holiday, the Sabbath, a day off to remember our connection with our Creator. God designed humanity to reflect His glory, each of us echoing a unique facet of His personality and character. Mind, body and spirit, we think, live and meditate. The astounding component? Freedom.

We owe our very breath to God, yet He gave us freedom to choose—a trait that risked catastrophe. A clever lie caused the first humans to question God's love and trustworthiness. Soon fear, envy and indifference scarred the world. Separating us from God, sin warped all that was good. Hearts rebelled. Bodies decayed. Relationships rotted. We could not reach God on our own; God would have to come to us.

And so God did, sending His Son to rebuild the shattered relationship between heaven and earth. God sent His Spirit to mend the disfigured image of God in us. The Spirit empowers us to reach out to others, demonstrating love and representing our Savior and Creator to a broken world

we're called to repair.

The Doctrine of Salvation:

We believe that God Redeems

Love. Harmony. Perfection. Once, all creation sang the same glorious song.

Disharmony erupted when a once-perfect being abused his God-given freedom. Satan “the accuser” chose self-centeredness and slander over truth and love. Satan claimed that God is not fair, that He’s harsh and controlling, depriving others of what they deserve.

Satan’s deception convinced a third of heaven’s angels, whom God expelled from heaven. Satan claimed rulership of our planet when he swindled its first couple, Adam and Eve, making them doubt God’s trustworthiness and love. That first sin distorted God’s image in us, twisting the world in on itself and threatening its self-destruction. The universe watched to see God’s response to Satan’s accusations.

The “great controversy” between good and evil over God’s character continues to rage, but Jesus, God’s own Son, settled its central question two thousand years ago when He died for humanity.

How strong is God’s love? Jesus’ self-sacrificing death showed that God is willing to pay the incalculable cost of our sins. His sacrifice unmasked the true horror of sin and made clear that God can be trusted. Why did Jesus’ death make such a difference? Because Jesus lived the perfect life that we’ve each failed to achieve and he died the death we each deserve.

The result: We can live for Him, now and forever. Jesus’ sacrifice reconciles us to a perfect God while transforming

our hearts. The Holy Spirit shows us our need for God and assures us that we are saved and forgiven. The Spirit writes a new script in our hearts, empowering us to live in freedom, service and joy. God treats us as if we had never sinned, never doubted, never gone our own way.

The same Jesus who subdued demons during His life declared victory over all evil powers at His death. Jesus' resurrection guarantees that death itself will die. Our new life in Jesus frees us from the fear of death and the shame of our past.

As we connect with Jesus, the Holy Spirit calms our hearts and transforms our outlook. Our spiritual life grows as we talk with God, ponder His Word, share our faith and worship through music and fellowship.

The Doctrine of The Church:

We believe that God Inhabits

Jesus left His followers with an epic mission: to tell the world of His love and His promise to return. They should also love people the way He loved them. Entrusting humans with His message was a bold and risky move. But even though God knew people would often fail Him and even distort His truth, He wanted to work with us.

The risk was worth the reward. As followers of Jesus, the church is called and inspired to act like Him: selflessly serving others, relying on God for strength, absorbing God's Word and telling the world about God's love. Male and female, rich and poor, people from all backgrounds or ethnicities are all equal in Jesus.

The church supports and encourages one another through time together in worship and Bible study. Christians celebrate Jesus' covenant with them through the ceremony of the Lord's Supper, remembering Jesus' example of service and sacrifice. The church celebrates each member's salvation through the ritual of baptism by immersion. The church is the hands and feet of the "body of Christ."

Jesus promised that everything He had done on Earth would be accomplished through His church as well. Yes, we are a pale reflection of our Savior's perfection, but Jesus is still the head of His church. Despite our imperfections, in His grace and through the power of His redeeming sacrifice, we will be a dazzling new creation.

In the world's last days, when much of God's message has

been neglected and discarded, God calls us to remember the hallmarks of His truth. The book of Revelation tells of three angels sent to Earth with a final message of hope and warning. Their story symbolizes God's end-time mission for His people.

The Holy Spirit empowers each of us with our own spiritual gifts and skills to share God's love and strengthen others. From teaching and preaching to encouraging and prophesying, the Spirit has provided the church with every gift it needs to accomplish its work.

The Doctrine of The Christian Life:

We believe that God Transforms

God's law in the Ten Commandments show us how to live and make clear our need for Jesus. Though the law shows us the path to follow and convicts us of sin, it's about far more than just toeing the line. The commandment's principles outline a holistic relationship with God, self and others.

Because God shows rather than just tells us how to live, Jesus came as an example of God's law brought to life. In contrast to the Sabbath observance of His day, Jesus emphasized the seventh-day Sabbath as both a day of rest and restoration. We observe the weekly Sabbath by pausing our self-striving, day-to-day business and seeking to serve and blessing others and doing good. The Sabbath is God's gift of freedom to us. It gives us time to restore ourselves, our families and our relationship with God.

God calls us to be His stewards, entrusted with responsibility. God entrusted the earth, its resources and its children to us to manage. One day soon He will return. We must be good stewards of our time, energy and bodies; the environment, material resources and each other. As Christians we don't just look out for our own interests but the bigger picture, weighing our actions in light of God's plans, knowing God will bless.

God desires us to live in wholeness and balance, caring for our bodies, refining our minds and nourishing our spirits. Knowing the high price Jesus paid to redeem us, we desire to glorify God in every aspect of our lives. As the

Spirit lives in us, we seek to uplift others and embody God's grace in our actions and interactions. As careful witnesses for God, we advance His priorities in our use of time, consume only that which nourishes our minds and bodies, and consider our impact on ourselves, others and society.

God created us in His image, male and female. The lifelong commitment of marriage is God's plan for His people to enjoy union and companionship, supporting and uplifting one another. God designed for children to grow up in an environment of love and discipline. Though families may fracture, all can be a part of the family of God.

The Doctrine of Last Day Events:

We believe that God Triumphs

From the Garden of Eden to the Tower of Babel, the destruction of Sodom to the Exodus from Egypt, God has always investigated before taking action. Now, before His return, Jesus is investigating the lives of everyone who ever lived, revealing the choices that led to salvation or destruction. God wants to make clear and transparent to the watching universe that no one reaps a fate they did not choose.

The ancient Hebrew sanctuary rituals were merely a reflection of Jesus' work in heaven, and every offering a foreshadowing of Jesus' ultimate sacrifice. Now, Jesus, our true high priest, offers the merits of His sacrifice to all who accept His grace. Because He endured every temptation we face, we can trust Jesus to understand our struggles and strengthen us when we need help. Jesus is our mediator, forgiving our sins and restoring our sin-shattered relationship with God. The first covenant condemned us to death, yet Jesus is the mediator of a new covenant whose sacrifice set us free.

The unconscious nothingness of death separates us from God and those we've lost. Only God is inherently immortal, yet the free gift of salvation is eternal life. We look forward to Jesus' Second Coming, when Jesus will resurrect His saved from the dead so they can live forever.

The first thousand years after Jesus' return will be a time of reconciliation and renewal in heaven. We will be able to

investigate the lives of the lost, exploring how their choices led to salvation or destruction. The Earth will be empty of people, home only to Satan and his angels, exiled with no one to mislead or destroy.

After a thousand years, God and the saved will return from heaven to Earth with the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem. God will resurrect the unrighteous dead so they can witness the final phase of God's judgment. Each person will face the record of his or her life, and all will see the true justice and fairness of God. Then God will destroy sin and sinners forever.

As God recreates the Earth, love, joy and harmony will at last be restored to the universe. Fear, suffering and death will only be a memory. We will know God face to face, and be free to create and explore without end.

A Summary:

Seventh-day Adventists believe salvation is a free gift of God's grace, made possible through the sinless life and the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and is accepted by faith on the part of the believer. We believe that we can have victory over sin by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, but that if we sin, forgiveness is available through Jesus Christ.

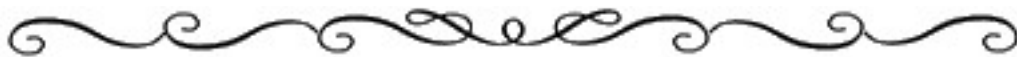
Seventh-day Adventists believe in one God, a unity of three co-eternal beings, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This loving God is the Creator and Sustainer of all things, and He has revealed Himself to humanity in His inspired Word, the Bible. We believe that the Bible is the only rule of faith and practice for the Christian. We urge its daily study, aided by prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Seventh-day Adventists believe the Ten commandments are a loving transcript of the character of God and a revelation of His will. We believe that we should keep His commandments (including the fourth, which enjoins the observance of the seventh day of the week as God's Sabbath), not as a means to salvation, but as a loving response to His loving gift of salvation.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that Jesus is presently ministering in our behalf in the heavenly sanctuary, and we believe in the soon return of Jesus to bring full redemption

to His people. We believe that the faithful who die prior to the Second Coming of Jesus will rest in the grave until the resurrection at that time. We believe in the final annihilation of the wicked by the fire that purges the earth during the executive phase of the judgment.

Seventh-day Adventists believe in spiritual gifts, including the spirit of prophecy. We believe that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, and proper care of our bodies is part of true spiritual living.



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Biblical references for the above statements may be obtained in a document of the 28 Fundamental Beliefs online at *www.adventist.org*

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